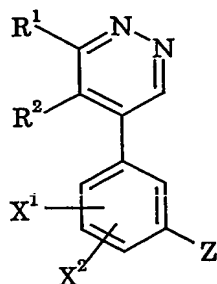


**CLAIMS:**

1. A compound of formula I, or an *N*-oxide thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof:



(I)

wherein

X<sup>1</sup> represents hydrogen, halogen, C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl, trifluoromethyl or C<sub>1-6</sub> alkoxy;

X<sup>2</sup> represents hydrogen or halogen;

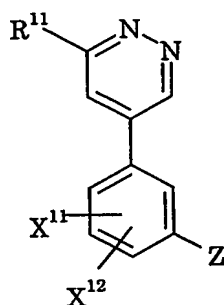
Z represents hydrogen, halogen, cyano, cyanomethyl, trifluoromethyl, nitro, hydroxy, C<sub>1-6</sub> alkoxy, formyl, C<sub>2-6</sub> alkoxycarbonyl, or an optionally substituted aryl, heteroaryl or heteroaryl(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkoxy group;

R<sup>1</sup> represents hydrogen, hydrocarbon, a heterocyclic group, halogen, cyano, trifluoromethyl, nitro, -OR<sup>a</sup>, -OSO<sub>2</sub>CF<sub>3</sub>, -SR<sup>a</sup>, -SOR<sup>a</sup>, -SO<sub>2</sub>R<sup>a</sup>, -SO<sub>2</sub>NR<sup>a</sup>R<sup>b</sup>, -NR<sup>a</sup>R<sup>b</sup>, -NR<sup>a</sup>COR<sup>b</sup>, -NR<sup>a</sup>CO<sub>2</sub>R<sup>b</sup>, -COR<sup>a</sup>, -CO<sub>2</sub>R<sup>a</sup>, -CONR<sup>a</sup>R<sup>b</sup> or -CR<sup>a</sup>=NOR<sup>b</sup>;

R<sup>2</sup> represents hydrogen or C<sub>2-6</sub> alkoxycarbonyl; and

R<sup>a</sup> and R<sup>b</sup> independently represent hydrogen, hydrocarbon or a heterocyclic group.

2. A compound as claimed in claim 1 represented by formula IIA, and *N*-oxides thereof and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof:



(IIA)

wherein

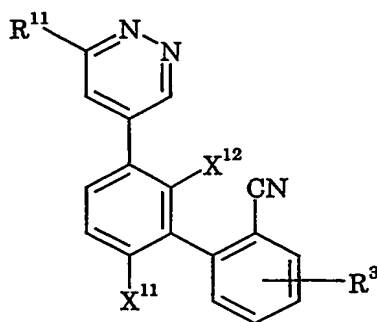
Z is as defined in claim 1;

5 X<sup>11</sup> represents hydrogen, fluoro, chloro, methyl, trifluoromethyl or methoxy;

X<sup>12</sup> represents hydrogen or fluoro; and

R<sup>11</sup> represents phenyl, halophenyl, dihalophenyl, trihalophenyl, (C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl)(halo)phenyl, (trifluoromethyl)(halo)phenyl, C<sub>1-6</sub> alkoxyphenyl, (C<sub>1-6</sub> alkoxy)(halo)phenyl, cyanophenyl, (cyano)(halo)phenyl, C<sub>3-7</sub> heterocycloalkyl (optionally substituted by oxo), C<sub>3-7</sub> heterocycloalkenyl, heteroaryl (optionally substituted by one or more halogen atoms, and/or by oxo), C<sub>1-6</sub> alkoxy, C<sub>2-6</sub> alkenyloxy, aryl(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkoxy, triflyloxy, C<sub>1-6</sub> alkylthio, C<sub>1-6</sub> alkylamino, C<sub>2-6</sub> alkenylamino, C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkylamino, 10 aryl(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkylamino (optionally substituted by C<sub>1-6</sub> alkoxy) or C<sub>2-6</sub> alkoxycarbonyl.

3. A compound as claimed in claim 2 represented by formula IIB, and *N*-oxides thereof and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof:

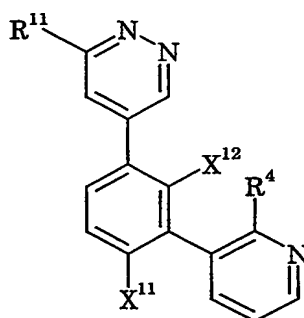


(IIB)

wherein  $X^{11}$ ,  $X^{12}$  and  $R^{11}$  are as defined in claim 2; and  
 $R^3$  represents hydrogen or fluoro.

5

4. A compound as claimed in claim 2 represented by formula  
 IIC, and *N*-oxides thereof and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof:



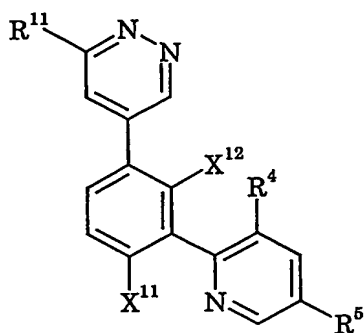
(IIC)

10

wherein  $X^{11}$ ,  $X^{12}$  and  $R^{11}$  are as defined in claim 2; and  
 $R^4$  represents hydrogen, fluoro, cyano or methyl.

5. A compound as claimed in claim 2 represented by formula  
 15 IID, and *N*-oxides thereof and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof:

104



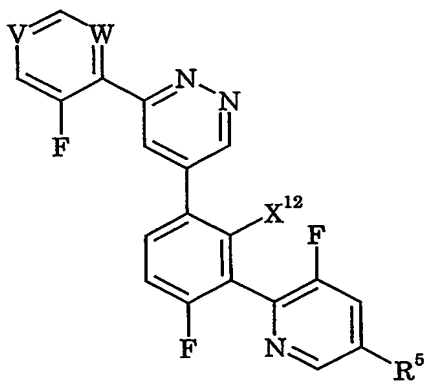
(IID)

wherein  $X^{11}$ ,  $X^{12}$  and  $R^{11}$  are as defined in claim 2;

$R^4$  is as defined in claim 4; and

5  $R^5$  represents hydrogen or fluoro.

6. A compound as claimed in claim 5 represented by formula IIE, and *N*-oxides thereof and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof:



(IIE)

10

wherein

V represents N and W represents CF<sub>3</sub>; or

V represents CF<sub>3</sub> and W represents N; or

15 V and W both represent CF<sub>3</sub>;

$X^{12}$  is as defined in claim 2; and

R<sup>5</sup> is as defined in claim 5.

7. A compound selected from:

- 3,5-diphenylpyridazine-4-carboxylic acid ethyl ester;
- 5 3,5-diphenylpyridazine-4-carboxylic acid methyl ester;
- 3,5-diphenylpyridazine;
- 5-[2-fluoro-3-(pyridin-3-yl)phenyl]-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 5-(3-isopropoxyphenyl)-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 3-(6-phenylpyridazin-4-yl)benzaldehyde;
- 10 4,2'-difluoro-5'-(6-phenylpyridazin-4-yl)biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;
- 5-(3-cyanophenyl)-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 5-(3-bromophenyl)-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 3-phenyl-5-[3-(pyridin-3-yl)phenyl]pyridazine;
- 3-phenyl-5-(3-[1,2,4]triazol-4-ylphenyl)pyridazine;
- 15 5-[2,4-difluoro-3-(pyridin-4-yl)phenyl]-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 5-[3-(2-methyl-2*H*-[1,2,4]triazol-3-ylmethoxy)phenyl]-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 6,2'-difluoro-5'-(6-phenylpyridazin-4-yl)biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;
- 5-[4-fluoro-3-(pyridin-4-yl)phenyl]-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 20 3-phenyl-5-[3-(pyridin-2-ylmethoxy)phenyl]pyridazine;
- 5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-4-yl)phenyl]-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 5-[2-fluoro-3-(pyridin-4-yl)phenyl]-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 5-[4-fluoro-3-(pyridin-3-yl)phenyl]-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 25 [3-(6-phenylpyridazin-4-yl)phenyl]acetonitrile;
- 2-fluoro-5-(6-phenylpyridazin-4-yl)benzonitrile;
- 5-(3-nitrophenyl)-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 3-(6-phenylpyridazin-4-yl)benzoic acid methyl ester;
- 3-(6-phenylpyridazin-4-yl)benzaldehyde;
- 30 5-(3-fluorophenyl)-3-phenylpyridazine;
- 3-phenyl-5-(3-trifluoromethylphenyl)pyridazine;

- 5-(3-methoxyphenyl)-3-phenylpyridazine;  
5,2'-difluoro-5'-(6-phenylpyridazin-4-yl)biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
3,2'-difluoro-5'-(6-phenylpyridazin-4-yl)biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
5-(4-fluoro-3-methoxyphenyl)-3-phenylpyridazine; |  
5 6,2'-difluoro-5'-[6-(4-fluorophenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
4-fluoro-3'-(6-phenylpyridazin-4-yl)biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
6,2'-difluoro-5'-[6-(thien-2-yl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
6,2'-difluoro-5'-[6-(4-methoxyphenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
5'-[6-(3-chlorophenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]-6,2'-difluorobiphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
10 6,2'-difluoro-5'-[6-(pyridin-3-yl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
5'-[6-(4-chlorophenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]-6,2'-difluorobiphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
6,2'-difluoro-5'-[6-(pyridin-4-yl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-(4-fluorophenyl)-  
pyridazine;  
15 5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(2-fluorophenyl)pyridazine;  
5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-(2-fluorophenyl)-  
pyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(pyridin-3-yl)pyridazine;  
5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-(3-fluorophenyl)-  
20 pyridazine;  
3-(2,4-difluorophenyl)-5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-  
pyridazine;  
5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-(3-methoxyphenyl)-  
pyridazine;  
25 6,2'-difluoro-5'-[6-(2-fluorophenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
6,2'-difluoro-5'-[6-(3-fluorophenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
3-[6-(3-fluorophenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]benzonitrile;  
3-[6-(2-fluorophenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]benzonitrile;  
3-[6-(4-fluorophenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]benzonitrile;  
30 3-[6-(4-methoxyphenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]benzonitrile;  
3-[6-(3,4-difluorophenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]benzonitrile;

- 3-[6-(2,4-difluorophenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]benzonitrile;  
5'-[6-(2-chlorophenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]-6,2'-difluorobiphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
3-(4-methoxyphenyl)-5-phenylpyridazine;  
4-fluoro-3'-[6-(4-methoxyphenyl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
5 5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-(4-methoxyphenyl)-  
pyridazine;  
3-(4-chlorophenyl)-5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-  
pyridazine;  
2-{5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]pyridazin-3-yl}-5-  
10 fluorobenzonitrile;  
3-(4-chlorophenyl)-5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]pyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(furan-3-yl)pyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(furan-2-yl)pyridazine;  
3-(2,3-difluorophenyl)-5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-  
15 pyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(thien-3-yl)pyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(thien-2-yl)pyridazine;  
3-(2,5-difluorophenyl)-5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-  
pyridazine;  
20 3-(3,4-difluorophenyl)-5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-  
pyridazine;  
4-{5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]pyridazin-3-yl}benzonitrile;  
*N*-[5-(3-bromophenyl)pyridazin-3-yl]-*N*-methylamine;  
*N*-[5-(3-bromophenyl)pyridazin-3-yl]-*N*-isopropylamine;  
25 *N*-[5-(3-bromophenyl)pyridazin-3-yl]-*N*-cyclopropylamine;  
*N*-allyl-*N*-[5-(3-bromophenyl)pyridazin-3-yl]amine;  
*N*-[5-(3-bromophenyl)pyridazin-3-yl]-*N*-ethylamine  
*N*-benzyl-*N*-[5-(3-bromophenyl)pyridazin-3-yl]amine;  
*N*-[5-(3-bromophenyl)pyridazin-3-yl]-*N*-(2-methoxybenzyl)amine;  
30 5-(3-bromophenyl)-3-(2,5-dihydropyrrol-1-yl)pyridazine;  
5-(3-bromophenyl)-3-ethoxypyridazine;

- 3-allyloxy-5-(3-bromophenyl)pyridazine;  
3-(6-isopropylaminopyridazin-4-yl)benzonitrile;  
3-(6-benzylaminopyridazin-4-yl)benzonitrile;  
3-[6-(2-methoxybenzylamino)pyridazin-4-yl]benzonitrile;  
5 3-(6-benzyloxypyridazin-4-yl)benzonitrile;  
3'-(6-ethylaminopyridazin-4-yl)-4-fluorobiphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
4-fluoro-3'-(6-isopropylaminopyridazin-4-yl)biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
4-fluoro-3'-(6-propylaminopyridazin-4-yl)biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
3'-(6-cyclopropylaminopyridazin-4-yl)-4-fluorobiphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
10 3'-(6-allylaminopyridazin-4-yl)-4-fluorobiphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
3'-(6-benzylaminopyridazin-4-yl)-4-fluorobiphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
4-fluoro-3'-(6-methylaminopyridazin-4-yl)biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
4-fluoro-3'-(6-methoxypyridazin-4-yl)biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
3'-(6-ethoxypyridazin-4-yl)-4-fluorobiphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
15 3'-(6-benzyloxypyridazin-4-yl)-4-fluorobiphenyl-2-carbonitrile;  
5-(4-fluoro-3-hydroxyphenyl)-3-phenylpyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(2-methyl-2*H*-[1,2,4]triazol-3-ylmethoxy)phenyl]-3-phenylpyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(1-methyl-3-trifluoromethyl-1*H*-pyrazol-4-ylmethoxy)phenyl]-  
20 3-phenylpyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(pyridin-4-ylmethoxy)phenyl]-3-phenylpyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(pyridin-3-ylmethoxy)phenyl]-3-phenylpyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(pyridin-4-yl)pyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(pyrazin-2-yl)pyridazine;  
25 5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(thiazol-2-yl)pyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(pyridin-2-yl)pyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(3-fluoropyridin-4-yl)pyridazine;  
5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(1*H*-[1,2,3]triazol-4-  
30 yl)pyridazine;

5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]pyridazine-3-carboxylic acid ethyl ester;

5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-(2-fluorophenyl)-pyridazine-1-oxide;

5 3-(2,6-difluorophenyl)-5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-pyridazine;

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

8. A compound selected from:

10 3-(4-chloro-2-fluorophenyl)-5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]pyridazine;

5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-(2-fluoro-4-trifluoromethylphenyl)pyridazine;

15 5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-(2-fluoro-4-methylphenyl)-pyridazine;

3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]pyridazine;

trifluoromethanesulfonic acid 5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]pyridazin-3-yl ester;

20 3-ethylsulfanyl-5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]pyridazine;

3-*tert*-butylsulfanyl-5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]pyridazine;  
5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-(3-fluoropyridin-4-yl)-pyridazine;

25 5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)-pyridazine;

5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)-pyridazine;

5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(3-fluoropyridin-4-yl)-pyridazine 1-oxide;

30 5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(3-fluoro-1-oxypyridin-4-yl)-pyridazine;

5-[2,4-difluoro-3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-4-yl)pyridazine;

5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-(2-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)pyridazine;

5 5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]-3-(2-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)-pyridazine;

3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-4-yl)-5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]pyridazine;

3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-5-[4-fluoro-3-(3-fluoropyridin-2-yl)phenyl]pyridazine;

3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-4-yl)-5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]pyridazine;

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

15 9. A compound selected from:

3-(3,5-difluoro-1-oxypyridin-4-yl)-5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]pyridazine;

5'-[6-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)pyridazin-4-yl]-2'-fluorobiphenyl-2-carbonitrile;

20 5'-[6-(3,5-difluoropyridin-4-yl)pyridazin-4-yl]-2'-fluorobiphenyl-2-carbonitrile;

4,2'-difluoro-5'-[6-(3,5-difluoropyridin-4-yl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;

4,2'-difluoro-5'-[6-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;

2-{5-[6-(3,5-difluoropyridin-4-yl)pyridazin-4-yl]-2-fluorophenyl}-nicotinonitrile;

2-{5-[6-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)pyridazin-4-yl]-2-fluorophenyl}-nicotinonitrile;

30 2'-fluoro-5'-[6-(2-oxopyrrolidin-1-yl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;

2'-fluoro-5'-[6-(2-oxo-2*H*-pyridin-1-yl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;

6,2'-difluoro-5'-[6-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)pyridazin-4-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;

5 3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-5-(4-fluoro-3-trifluoromethylphenyl)pyridazine;  
3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-5-(6-fluoro-2'-trifluoromethylbiphenyl-3-yl)-pyridazine;

5-(6,2'-difluorobiphenyl-3-yl)-3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)pyridazine;

3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-5-(6,2',4'-trifluorobiphenyl-3-yl)pyridazine;

10 5-[3-(3,5-difluoropyridin-2-yl)-4-fluorophenyl]-3-(2,4,6-trifluorophenyl)-pyridazine;

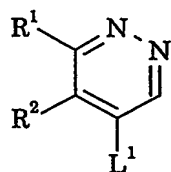
and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

10. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of  
15 formula I, or an *N*-oxide thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in association with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

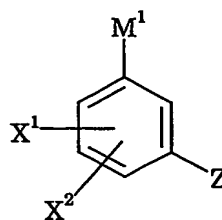
11. The use of a compound as defined in claim 1, or an *N*-oxide thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, for the manufacture  
20 of a medicament for the treatment and/or prevention of neurological disorders.

12. A process for the preparation of a compound as claimed in claim 1, which comprises:

25 (A) reacting a compound of formula III with a compound of formula IV:



(III)

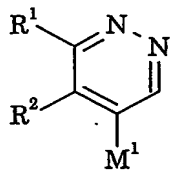


(IV)

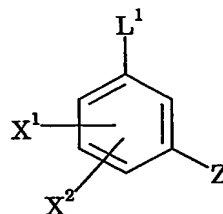
wherein  $X^1$ ,  $X^2$ ,  $Z$ ,  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  are as defined in claim 1,  $L^1$  represents a suitable leaving group, and  $M^1$  represents a boronic acid moiety  $-B(OH)_2$  or a cyclic ester thereof formed with an organic diol, or  $M^1$  represents  $-Sn(Alk)_3$  in which Alk represents  $C_{1-6}$  alkyl, or  $M^1$  represents  $-ZnHal$  in which Hal represents halogen; in the presence of a transition metal catalyst; or

(B) reacting a compound of formula V with a compound of formula

10 VI:



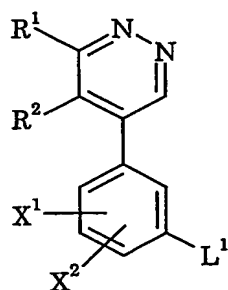
(V)



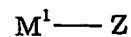
(VI)

15 wherein  $X^1$ ,  $X^2$ ,  $Z$ ,  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  are as defined in claim 1, and  $L^1$  and  $M^1$  are as defined above; in the presence of a transition metal catalyst; or

(C) reacting a compound of formula VII with a compound of formula VIII:



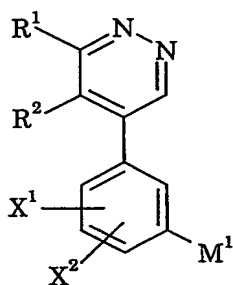
(VII)



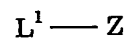
(VIII)

wherein  $X^1$ ,  $X^2$ ,  $Z$ ,  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  are as defined in claim 1, and  $L^1$  and  $M^1$  are as defined above; in the presence of a transition metal catalyst; or

- 5 (D) reacting a compound of formula IX with a compound of formula X:



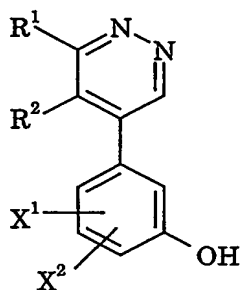
(IX)



(X)

- 10 wherein  $X^1$ ,  $X^2$ ,  $Z$ ,  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  are as defined in claim 1, and  $L^1$  and  $M^1$  are as defined above; in the presence of a transition metal catalyst; or

(E) reacting a compound of formula XI with a compound of formula XII:



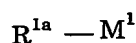
(XI)



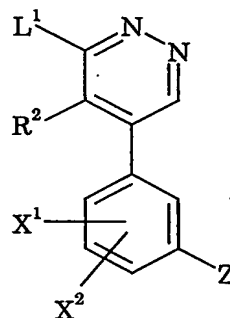
(XII)

wherein  $X^1$ ,  $X^2$ ,  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  are as defined in claim 1, and  $Z^1$  represents  $C_{1-6}$  alkyl or optionally substituted heteroaryl( $C_{1-6}$ )alkyl; in the presence of triphenylphosphine and a dialkyl azodicarboxylate; or

(F) reacting a compound of formula XIV with a compound of formula XV:



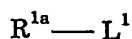
(XIV)



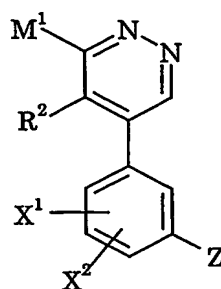
(XV)

wherein  $X^1$ ,  $X^2$ ,  $Z$  and  $R^2$  are as defined in claim 1,  $L^1$  and  $M^1$  are as defined above, and  $R^{1a}$  represents an aryl or heteroaryl moiety; in the presence of a transition metal catalyst; or

(G) reacting a compound of formula XVI with a compound of formula XVII:



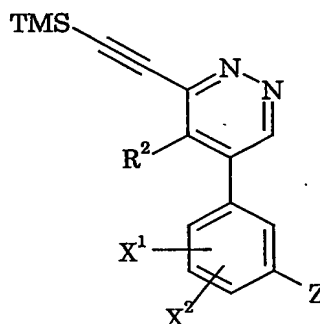
(XVI)



(XVII)

wherein  $X^1$ ,  $X^2$ ,  $Z$  and  $R^2$  are as defined in claim 1, and  $R^{1a}$ ,  $L^1$  and  $M^1$  are as defined above; in the presence of a transition metal catalyst; or

5 (H) reacting a compound of formula XVIII:



(XVIII)

10 wherein  $X^1$ ,  $X^2$ ,  $Z$  and  $R^2$  are as defined in claim 1, and TMS is an abbreviation for trimethylsilyl; with sodium azide; or

(J) reacting a compound of formula XV as defined above with a compound of formula  $R^a-OH$ , wherein  $R^a$  is as defined in claim 1; or

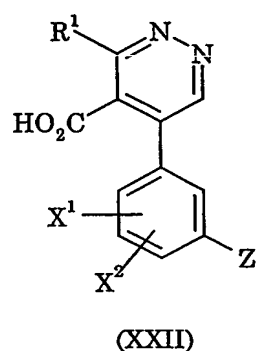
(K) reacting a compound of formula XV as defined above with a salt of formula  $R^aS \cdot Na^+$ , wherein  $R^a$  is as defined in claim 1; or

15 (L) reacting a compound of formula XV as defined above with a compound of formula  $H-NR^aR^b$ , wherein  $R^a$  and  $R^b$  are as defined in claim 1; or

(M) reacting a compound of formula XV as defined above with carbon dioxide and a compound of formula  $R^a-OH$ , wherein  $R^a$  is as defined in claim 1; in the presence of a transition metal catalyst; or

(N) reacting a compound of formula VII above wherein  $L^1$  represents a halogen atom with zinc cyanide; in the presence of a transition metal catalyst; or

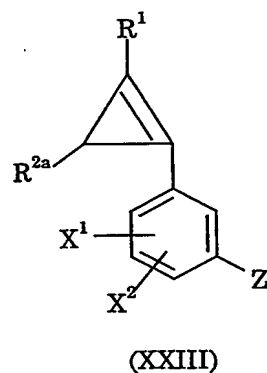
(P) reacting a compound of formula XXII:



10

wherein  $X^1$ ,  $X^2$ , Z and  $R^1$  are as defined in claim 1; with diazomethane; or

(Q) reacting a compound of formula XXIII:



15

wherein  $X^1$ ,  $X^2$ , Z and  $R^1$  are as defined in claim 1, and  $R^{2a}$  represents  $C_{2-6}$  alkoxy carbonyl; with diazomethane; and

(R) subsequently, if required, converting a compound of formula I initially obtained into a further compound of formula I by standard methods.

- 5           13.    A method for the treatment and/or prevention of neurological disorders which comprises administering to a patient in need of such treatment an effective amount of a compound of formula I as defined in claim 1, or an *N*-oxide thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

10